

REMARKS

Applicants hereby acknowledge the Office Action mailed on July 12, 2006. Applicants request reconsideration of the allowability of the present application in view of the above claim amendments and the following remarks.

Examiner's Objections to Drawings

In the present Office Action, the Examiner objects to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a). Specifically, the Examiner indicates that the drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. The Examiner alleges that "the resilient arms being connected at the bottom side thereof to the outer wall" in Claim 4 is not shown in the Figures. In addition, the Examiner alleges that the Figures fail to show the "chain links having different accommodation cavities for different components or component stages" as recited in Claim 17.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the objections to the drawings based upon the language recited in Claim 4. The embodiment of the invention depicted in Figures 12-15 clearly shows this feature. In addition, the specification includes language describing the depicted embodiment at Page 11, lines 371-375 which read, in part: "[i]n this embodiment, the resilient wall 6 consists of two resilient arms 28 which at the lower end thereof are fixedly connected to outer wall 7....".

Applicants also respectfully disagree with the objections to the drawings based upon the language recited in Claim 17. Applicants direct the Examiner to the various embodiments of the invention depicted in Figures 1-4, 5-11 and 12-15. The embodiments of the invention shown in each of these groups of Figures include different accommodation cavities. These differing cavities allow the chain links to receive different components or component stages. Thus, the Figures of the present application depict different accommodation cavities for different components or component stages, as set forth in Claim 17.

Claim Objections

In the present Office Action, the Examiner objects to Claims 10, 14, 15 and 20 for various reasons. Above, Applicants have amended these claims in order to correct all of the deficiencies stated by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants request that the Examiner withdraw the objections to these claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. The Examiner based this rejection upon the lack of antecedent basis for the limitation of "the pins" recited in Claim 12. With this response, Applicants amend Claim 12 in order to ensure proper antecedent basis and now assert that Claim 12 is allowable under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejects Claims 1-8, 11, 15, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuzoe (European Patent 0660655) in view of Pomerantz (U.S. Patent No. 6,152,807). Similarly, the Examiner rejects claims 9 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuzoe, Pomerantz, and McBain, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,060,978). In making these rejections, the Examiner asserts "Matsuzoe discloses a transport system for small components, arranged in series comprising a chain having a plurality of chain links..." The Examiner then alleges Matsuzoe discloses all of the limitations of the rejected claims except, for the limitation of a resilient wall oriented opposite the rigid wall.

The Examiner further asserts:

Pomerantz does disclose a resilient wall (72, 80) oriented opposite a rigid wall (71, wall opposing 80 in Figure 8). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the wall arrangement of Matsuzoe's invention with that of Pomerantz's resilient wall, thereby arranging the resilient wall opposite to the Matsuzoe's rigid wall to

provide for a range of different sized components as well as to provide for a more secure holding arrangement of the small components while they are being conveyed (see column 4 lines 45-55).

See the Office Action, page 5.

Applicants respectfully disagree that Matsuzoe fails to disclose all of the limitation of the pending claims except a resilient wall oriented opposite a rigid wall. In addition, Applicants respectfully disagree that it would have been obvious to modify the wall arrangement of Matsuzoe's invention with Pomerantz's resilient wall to provide for a range of different sized components and a more secure holding arrangement for the reasons set forth in previous responses.

Although Applicants disagree with the combinations and rejections set forth by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 103, with this response Applicants have amended Independent Claims 1 and 18 in order to clarify the present invention and proceed to issuance. Independent Claim 1 now requires that the resilient wall comprise "a central web extending in a direction of insertion of the small components and a plurality of straight resilient arms laterally extending from said central web and each said straight resilient arm is configured to urge the small component against the rigid wall when the cavity accommodates the small component." Support for this additional limitation may be found throughout the specification. For example, Figure 2 depicts an embodiment of the present invention utilizing a resilient wall comprising a central web and a plurality of straight resilient arms laterally extending therefrom.

The Examiner characterizes Matsuzoe as teaching a central web, represented by the center of component 13 with two resilient arms laterally extending therefrom, represented by the end portions of component 13. Although Applicants disagree with this characterization of the Matsuzoe invention, it is clear from Matsuzoe that the ends of the component 13 do not urge the small component in any manner, and especially do not urge a small component toward a rigid wall. Accordingly, regardless of the characterization of component 13, Matsuzoe clearly fails to disclose a resilient wall comprising a central web and a plurality of

resilient arms configured to urge the small component against a rigid wall. Thus, Applicants assert that Claim 1 is clearly allowable over the cited prior art.

With this response, Applicants have also made similar claim amendments to Independent Claim 18. Specifically, Claim 18 now requires that the resilient wall include a central web and a plurality of straight resilient arms extending laterally therefrom. The straight resilient arms are configured to urge a small component in the direction of a rigid wall. As this claim limitation is clearly absent from the prior art, Applicants assert that Independent Claim 18 is allowable over the cited prior art.

Furthermore, Applicants have added new Independent Claims 21 and 22 to the present application. Independent Claim 21 is directed to a transport system for small components and includes claim limitations describing a resilient wall comprising an outer wall and a plurality of resilient arms. The resilient arms include a lower side connected to the outer wall and an upper side. The upper side is free standing and resilient to urge a small component toward a rigid wall. The specification and Figures provide support for this claim throughout including, but not limited to, Figures 12 and 13 and the corresponding description thereof. Since the cited prior art fails to disclose at least this claim limitation, as specifically set forth in Claim 21, Applicants submit that Independent Claim 21 is allowable over the cited prior art.

Independent Claim 22 is directed to a transport system for small components including limitations directed toward a resilient wall. The resilient wall includes a central web and a plurality of resilient arms extending therefrom. The resilient arms frictionally engage the small component to retain the component within the cavity accommodating the component. Applicants assert that the cited prior art fails to teach all of the limitations recited within newly added Claim 22. Accordingly, Applicants assert that Independent Claim 22 is allowable over the cited prior art.

The Examiner has Mis-Applied Applicants' Prior Responses

In the Examiner's rebuttal to Applicants arguments of the present Office Action, the Examiner twice mischaracterizes previous comments made by the Applicants. On page 12 of the present Office Action, the Examiner states the following: "as admitted by the Applicant's Remarks on Page 7 lines 11-12 'Matsuzoe doesn't not show a device where the chip is urged against any rigid wall'" (emphasis added). Applicants did not make this comment in any previous response. Applicant has previously stated: "[t]hus Matsuzoe does not show a device where the chip is urged against any rigid wall." Applicants set forth this comment when discussing Matsuzoe in an effort to communicate that a wall that moves does not constitute a rigid wall.

The Examiner also takes previous comments of the Applicants out of context. On page 12, lines 16-17, the Examiner states "on page 8 lines 18-19 'Firstly with respect to numeral 13, this could not be a rigid wall as this wall moves', thereby creating a 'positive locking' arrangement, as quoted by the Applicant above from the previous set of Arguments." The Examiner continues by indicating that the positive locking arrangement is analogous to a rigid structure. The Examiner also apparently indicates Applicants admitted that a positive locking arrangement equates to a rigid structure with these statements. Applicants completely disagree.

Firstly, Applicants made no such statement regarding positive locking equating to a rigid structure. Applicants contend that positive locking may or may not be accomplished through a rigid structure, depending on the type of structure utilized. Thus, the Examiner apparently developed the above "admission" by taking statements of Applicants out of context.

Secondly, Applicants explained positive locking as taught in Matsuzoe on page 6 of Applicants' the prior response. Specifically, Applicants set forth the manner in which Matsuzoe retains circuit chips in place per the teachings of Matsuzoe. As explained in the reference, Matsuzoe retains chips through positive locking accomplished with pawls 16 that

extend over leads of the chip in order to retain the chip within the cavity. This type of locking arrangement is completely independent of whether Matsuzoe includes a rigid wall. Furthermore, this type of locking arrangement does not demonstrate any type of urging of the chip by the resilient wall. Instead, this type of positive locking mechanism demonstrates a retention of the chip being accomplished by the pawls 16.

Conclusion

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants believe Independent Claims 1, 18, 21 and 22 are allowable over the cited prior art. In addition, with the above Amendments, Applicants have overcome the objections to dependent claims 10, 14, 15 and 20 and have overcome the rejection to claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Furthermore, for the reasons set forth in detail above, the objections to the drawings are improper as the drawings do support the limitations set forth in Claim 4 and Claim 17. Thus, since all deficiencies in the dependent claims have been corrected and all of the dependent claims each ultimately depend from allowable Independent Claims 1, 18, 21 or 22, Applicants assert that all claims pending in this application are allowable over the cited prior art and that the present application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, passage to issuance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner disagrees, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the representative of the Applicants set forth below in order to discuss any outstanding issues.

Appl. No. 09/857,353
Amendment Dated November 3, 2006
Reply to Office Action of July 12, 2006

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Customer No. 27187

If necessary to affect a timely response, please consider this paper a request for an extension of time, and charge any shortages in fees, or apply any overpayment credits, to Baker & Daniels' Deposit Account No. 02-0387 (72262.90014). However, please do not include the payment of issue fees.

Respectfully submitted,

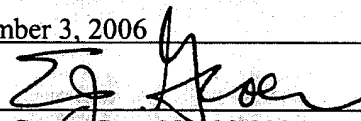


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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on

November 3, 2006

Date



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